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ABSTRACT

Three documents and eight journal articles on staff development (focusing particularly on inservice teacher education), selected from those recently made available through the ERIC system, are described briefly in this report. Topics covered by the items listed include enhancing teachers' perceptions of themselves, identifying workable staff development programs, implementing staff development programs in small schools and districts, improving inservice training methods, selecting locations for inservice training, involving teachers in planning and managing their own professional development, assessing the need for inservice training, and recognizing the needs of adult learners for experiential learning in informal settings. (PGD)

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THE BEST OF ERIC

ON EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management

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Staff Development

1 **Burch, Barbara G., and Danley, W. Elzie, Sr.** "Self-Perception: An Essential in Staff Development." *NASSP Bulletin*, 62, 417 (April 1978), pp. 15-19. EJ 175 596.

Many studies have shown that "the performance of people depends in large part upon how the individual perceives his own competencies and abilities." Thus, one important strategy for improving teacher effectiveness is to enhance the self-images of teachers. In this article, Burch and Danley explain how principals can indirectly improve the quality of instruction by helping teachers develop and maintain more positive perceptions of themselves.

Teachers, like everyone else, have a need to feel accepted and respected for what they are and what they do. Administrators can help teachers feel more confident and accepted by approaching them with the attitude that they "can do." Principals should also "approach interactions with teachers on a collegial basis" and de-emphasize positional status as much as possible. Before decisions are made teachers should be consulted about important issues that affect them.

When teachers do a good job, it is important that they be recognized "by their colleagues within the school, others within the profession, and by those outside the profession." To generate peer approval—"the highest form of professional recognition"—administrators can use good teachers to teach others, place them in positions of leadership, or recommend them to others. Excellence in teaching can also be recognized through letters of appreciation, individual comments, or special announcements.

2 **ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.** *Staff Development. Research Action Brief Number 10.* Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon, 1980. 5 pages. ED 189 679.

The educational literature contains a large number of reports on "successful" staff development programs. Yet how many of these programs really work, and how can an administrator choose one that is right for his or her school? This publication helps to answer these questions by sorting through "the many dubious reports on staff development programs" and reporting on the few useful studies that identify the important ingredients of successful staff development programs.

A recent study by the Rand Corporation, for example, identified several staff development strategies that had significant effects on the success of educational innovations. The most successful training was "concrete, ongoing, and teacher specific," states the report, and gave teachers "hands-on" training and access to "the kind of assistance they needed when they needed it." Local resource personnel, who were continually available, were more useful than outside consultants, whose suggestions were perceived as too "general, untimely, and irrelevant."

Observing staff development projects in other classrooms or districts proved to be a useful technique, for it allowed communication among teachers in similar situations. The principal's participation in the training was also found to be essential to a program's success. Surprisingly, however, giving teachers extra pay for the training "had either insignificant or negative effects."

Three main themes emerge from the research on staff development reviewed here. First, training should involve "less theory and intellectualizing and more practice and participation." Second, training should be individualized and should be designed to meet the on-the-job needs of teachers. And third, teachers should participate more in "choosing and running staff development programs."

3 **Halstead, David.** "Developing a Professional Growth Program in Small Schools." *NASSP Bulletin*, 64, 438 (October 1980), pp. 26-32. EJ 232 070.

Staff development is as important in small schools and districts as it is in large. And contrary to what some educators believe, a successful, ongoing inservice program is not out of reach for small schools. The keys to success, says Halstead, are "planning and commitment on the part of the building principal and a cooperative professional growth committee."

The principal should select staff members "who have demonstrated initiative, innovation, and cooperation in the past" to serve on the committee and should ask for volunteers as well. The principal should do the "preplanning"—assessing the current need for a program and studying recent research on inservice—and then present his or her ideas to the committee. The committee should then develop and administer a "needs assessment tool" to determine staff members' specific strengths, weaknesses, and needs. Halstead includes an example of a needs assessment questionnaire.

Before implementing a program, the principal should make sure that committee members agree with the direction to be taken. The program should be ongoing as opposed to "one-shot," and the program's effects should be regularly evaluated and changes made as needed.

Halstead suggests that the principal, and the committee periodically identify some topics of current interest in the school and then develop and present information relevant to these topics

during regular faculty meetings. Since staff members in small schools often do little professional reading or outside study, the principal could also distribute interesting or controversial articles to the staff.

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4 **Joyce, Bruce,** and **Showers, Beverly.** "Improving Inservice Training: The Messages of Research." *Educational Leadership,* 37, 5 (February 1980), pp. 379-85. EJ 216 055.

What types of inservice teacher training methods are most effective for helping teachers improve their skills? Joyce and Showers analyzed over two hundred research studies that addressed this question and they present here the conclusions of their extensive investigation.

From the research literature, Joyce and Showers identified five major "components of training": presentation of theory, demonstration of skills, practice in classrooms or simulated settings, feedback about performance, and inclassroom coaching. Next the authors defined the "levels of impact" that these training methods could have.

The lowest level of impact is simple awareness of a teaching technique or its importance. The next level of impact is achieved when a training method gives teachers a clear and developed concept of the technique, and a still higher level is achieved when the method imparts the skills needed to apply the concept. The highest level of impact—and the only one with real effect on teaching—is achieved when the learned skills are transferred to the teacher's classroom behavior.

Presenting the theory behind a new technique "is not powerful enough alone to achieve much impact beyond the awareness level," state the authors, but when combined with other training techniques, "it is an important component." Modeling or demonstrating the technique increases the mastery of theory and helps develop organized knowledge of a technique.

Once awareness and knowledge are attained, practicing the technique under simulated conditions is essential for acquiring the necessary skills. After practice, some teachers can transfer the new skills to the classroom, but most teachers require coaching in the classroom to make the transfer of skills complete. Feedback—both "structured" and "unstructured"—can also help transfer the learned skills to the classroom. Joyce and Showers emphasize that a combination of all the training components is necessary for maximum impact.

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5 **Kelley, Edgar A.,** and **Dillon, Elizabeth A.** "Staff Development: It Can Work for You." *NASSP Bulletin,* 62, 417 (April 1978), pp. 7-8. EJ 175 594.

Staff development can be defined as "all those activities sponsored or recognized by the school district that "help employees do their work better and with greater satisfaction." In recent years, interest in staff development has grown significantly. One cause of this renewed interest, state Kelley and Dillon, is declining enrollment, which has caused "a corresponding decline in teacher turnover with concomitant decreases in mobility and creativity within the profession." Other causes include increased public dissatisfaction with the schools and increased pressures for accountability.

Effective staff development should have several important characteristics. It should evolve from a diagnosis of both district and individual needs and should be designed and implemented to meet those needs. It should be a continuous, ongoing process and should involve all professional staff, including administrators. "Extensive use of one-shot 'dog-and-pony shows'" should be avoided, state the authors, as should outside experts "who are willing to provide a snake-oil cure-all—for a fee—but are unable or unwilling to remain until their panaceas have been implemented and tested."

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Staff development should also use what the authors call the "multiplication principle": teachers who are competent or who have recently been trained to be competent should be used to train other teachers in specific skill areas. Kelley and Dillon also suggest that preservice and inservice training be visualized as "a continuum of development which is the joint responsibility of the local school district and institutions of higher education." Included is a brief description of the authors' experiences in assisting junior high schools in Lincoln (Nebraska) develop a staff development program.

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6 **Lawrence, Gordon.** *Patterns of Effective Inservice Education: A State of the Art Summary of Research on Materials and Procedures for Changing Teacher Behaviors in Inservice Education.* Tallahassee, Florida: Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Florida State Department of Education, 1974. 47 pages. ED 176 424.

The most successful inservice programs are those that involve teachers in the planning and management of their own professional development. Successful programs also provide opportunities for teachers to practice their newly learned skills and receive feedback from knowledgeable resource persons. These are two of the central conclusions arrived at by Lawrence after reviewing ninety-seven research studies on staff development programs.

Lawrence and colleagues compiled all the research studies they could find that dealt with the improvement of the professional competencies of employed teachers. Next, the research team formulated fourteen factors or categories that they used to classify and analyze the widely varying programs.

The team found that inservice programs held in schools and on college campuses were equally capable of affecting teacher behavior, but those held at the school site influenced more complex

behaviors, such as teacher attitudes. Programs were more successful when teachers participated as helpers to each other and to outside personnel conducting the program. More success was also reported when school administrators helped to conduct the program or conducted the program themselves.

Inservice programs that had "differentiated training experiences for different teachers" were more likely to accomplish their goals, as were programs that emphasized "demonstrations, supervised trials and feedback." Placing teachers in an active role instead of a receptive one and encouraging teachers to assist each other also led to success. Lawrence discusses the implications of these findings and outlines four examples of "well-designed studies" of inservice programs.

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7 **McLaughlin, Milbrey Wallin,** and **Marsh, David D.** "Staff Development and School Change." *Teachers College Record,* 80, 1 (September 1978), pp. 69-94. EJ 195 497.

Staff development—"education's neglected stepchild"—is currently receiving much greater attention, in part due to declining enrollment and the declining employment of new teachers that goes with it. Districts must now work with what they've got—older and tenured teachers. Despite this rekindled interest, however, most educators still believe that staff development as it is now practiced has little or no value. So what can be done?

One potential course of action, suggested in this insightful and well-written article, is to rethink "both the nature and the role of staff-development programs." McLaughlin and Marsh here summarize and reflect on the findings of a recent and extensive Rand Corporation study that "presents a fundamentally different view of staff development" than that now found in the literature or in practice.

Not surprisingly, the study found teacher commitment to be a major factor contributing to the success of staff development programs. Teacher commitment, in turn, was strongly influenced by the strategy of program planning. A collaborative planning style—in which administrators and teachers had roughly equal influences on the program's development—was "necessary to both the short-term and long-run success of a planned change effort." Both "top-down" planning and "grassroots" planning—in which teachers conceived the plans—were far less successful.

Teacher commitment was also heavily influenced by the program's extent. "Complex and ambitious" programs were more likely to stimulate teachers than were limited and routine programs. McLaughlin and Marsh speculate that ambitious programs "appeal to a teacher's sense of professionalism" and thus give "intrinsic" rewards that are highly motivating. Supporting this notion is the finding that "extrinsic" rewards such as extra pay actually led to *less* achievement of program goals.

The study also found that successful staff development programs had two complementary elements: "staff-training activities," through which specific skills were taught, and "training-support activities." Support activities—such as continuing classroom assistance by resource personnel and frequent project meetings—were essential for the retention of the newly learned skills. Also included are extensive discussions of institutional leadership and teacher characteristics as influences on the success of staff development programs.

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8 **Olivarez, Ruben Dario,** and **Berrier, Helen.** *School-Based Inservice Teacher Education. A Handbook for Planning and Providing.* Austin, Texas: College of Education, University of Texas, 1978. 21 pages. ED 186 391.

Many if not most inservice programs are still considered to be ineffective and a waste of time by the teachers who are required to attend them. This situation could be improved, the authors contend, if individual schools established "school-based inservice education" programs that allowed the school's staff to both "determine its own needs for professional development" and "utilize its own strengths and talents to meet those needs." The authors here outline one such program that they developed for an elementary school's staff.

In phase I of the program, the principal establishes a steering committee of teachers to help oversee and guide the program. The steering committee and the principal cooperate to run an afternoon workshop in which all faculty members (divided into small groups) help to answer such fundamental questions as what inservice education is, who should plan and provide it, and what the content should be.

In phase II, teachers meet by grade level to assess their individual and group needs for professional development. With the group leader's help, the grade-level groups select three areas to focus their training on, and then assess available resources (including "local talent") and determine projected dates, places, trainers, materials, and costs of the training.

In phase III, the training sessions are conducted, again with strong input from teachers. "Each grade level training group ought to be responsible for directing its own training experience," state the authors. The groups should find their own consultants, if desired, negotiate their own meeting times, and purchase their own materials. In phase IV, the program is evaluated for future improvement.

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9 **Trohanis, Pascal,** and **Jackson, Elouise.** "The Technical Assistance Approach to Inservice." *Educational Leadership,* 37, 5 (February 1980), pp. 386-89. EJ 216 056.

"An effective and efficient inservice program requires an overall framework to guide its implementation." In this article, Trohanis and Jackson outline one such framework—termed the "technical assistance" inservice model—which they claim "offers a workable alternative to more traditional inservice approaches."

In the initial step of the five-step technical assistance process, the "agent"—who provides the aid—and the "client"—who receives it—work together to identify the objectives of the process. In this step, the agent—whether it be a principal or other district administrator— becomes "thoroughly familiar with the overall goals, methods, and time schedule" of the teacher or teachers being assisted. In step two, the client and agent decide how to bridge the gap "between where the [instructional] program is and where the client would like it to be."

Once the needs for inservice are assessed, a written agreement between agent and client is drawn up that specifies "in clear,

straightforward language exactly what is to be done for and by the client." In step four, the agent systematically locates, retrieves, and delivers the resources needed by the client, whether they be topical workshops, funds for materials, or arrangements to observe other programs. In step five, the technical assistance process is reviewed and evaluated.

This inservice model, state the authors, can be used to help staff members acquire specific skills or can be used "as a closed-loop program" to improve instruction on a continuing basis. Included is an example of a written technical assistance agreement.

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10 **Webster, William C.** "Many Resources Available for Staff Development." *Thrust for Educational Leadership*, 9, 4 (March 1980), pp. 8-10. EJ 221 571.

The most valuable resources available to a school district for staff development are the principals, teachers, and central office personnel who work in the district. Additional help can often be obtained from traditional sources, such as state departments of education, county offices, and colleges and universities. Webster here describes several new sources of staff development assistance that have recently emerged in California—some funded by the state and some by the federal government.

For over a decade, California has been funding "Professional Development and Program Improvement Centers" that are designed to improve classroom instruction for Title I students, particularly in the areas of reading and math. The centers use a process of clinical supervision with sustained followup and assistance at the school site. Local districts may contract with these centers for the services of their well-trained personnel.

The California Writing Project, an outgrowth of the successful Bay Area Writing Project, is an intensive summer training program for teachers at all levels. A carefully selected group of teachers work with university faculty to improve their own skills, and then they assist other teachers to do the same during the school year.

In 1977, a staff development bill was passed in California that established six "State School Resource Centers." The centers conduct training programs, contract for outside assistance to help local districts meet their staff development needs, and help schools conduct needs assessments. California also has four federally funded "Teaching Centers" that offer the same kinds of services as the state centers.

Webster also describes staff development resources available through the Federal Teacher Corps, Bilingual Education Service Centers, and Child Service Demonstration Centers.

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11 **Wood, Fred H.,** and **Thompson, Steven R.** "Guidelines for Better Staff Development." *Educational Leadership*, 37, 5 (February 1980), pp. 374-78. EJ 216 054.

"Inservice teacher training, as it is now constituted, is the slum of American education," state Wood and Thompson. "It is disadvantaged, poverty-stricken, neglected, and has little effect." The authors here review the reasons why staff development is in such disrepair and then offer practical suggestions for its revitalization.

In state and national surveys, teachers and principals report defects in staff development programs such as poor planning and organization, irrelevance to actual classroom situations, lack of participant involvement in planning, and lack of followup in the classroom. Other problems stem from the view of teachers held by staff development personnel as "needing to be" controlled and "wishing to avoid responsibility."

However, "the major flaw in staff development," state the authors, is "that we have ignored what is known about the adult learner." In particular, adult learning should be experience based, because "experiential learning accommodates the special learning styles of adults, and it maximizes the transfer of learning from training setting to application on the job." Recent research also suggests that adults prefer to learn in informal settings, which implies that inservice training should be held in the normal work setting.

Adult learning is further enhanced by inservice programs that demonstrate respect, trust, and concern for the learner. Thus, inservice educators should reduce the threat of external judgment from superiors and encourage participants to work in small groups and learn from each other. Teachers should also have more control over what and how they are learning, and they should be given ample opportunity to practice, in real or simulated settings, what they learn.

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